

## **Plan to Establish a Department of Public Works In the FY 11 Operating Budget**

### **Introduction**

At the November 5, 2009 meeting between the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, it was voted by majority to implement a Department of Public Works in the FY11 budget, identify cost-savings and efficiencies, and meet with affected departments, boards and commissions to hear their concerns regarding consolidation. The majority opinion was based in part on State officials' recommendations to prepare for reduced local aid for FY11, anticipated costs to address current problems, such as perchlorate remediation, the belief that consolidation is a viable means to control rising operational expenses and future capital requirements of the town. One member each of the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen was tasked with outlining a plan to follow through on the motion and address Town Meeting concerns.

### **Plan Overview**

The plan objective is to begin the process of incorporating a consolidated Public Works Department into the FY11 operating budget. Sufficient time is necessary to adjust the budget accommodating any proposed DPW consolidation plan recommendations and to meet the Annual Town Meeting timeline. The plan steps have a target deadline of late February. The overview is as follows:

- Step 1: Create a vision and a mission statement for a consolidated Public Works Department that can be articulated.
- Step 2: Meet with affected boards, committees, commissions and departments to understand issues and concerns with DPW creation.
- Step 3: Document all input.
- Step 4: Develop start-up DPW policies.
- Step 5: Adjust the vision and mission statement, if needed.
- Step 6: Identify specific cost savings, cost avoidances and efficiencies, as well as service level improvements that can be expected and determine whether any should be incorporated into the 2011 budget.
- Step 7: Recommend department/function integration and timing plan.
- Step 8: Present plan to all affected boards, committees, commissions and departments to gain final buy-in or out.

Note: It is assumed that certain steps of this plan will require some iteration with various boards, committees, commissions and/or departments.

## **Plan Detail**

A high-level overview of this plan was presented to the Joint Boards on November 12<sup>th</sup>. The boards were generally receptive to this overview. It was stated greater detail would be forthcoming and is presented below. The plan is presented with options that will require decisions be made by the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee as soon as possible to meet the aggressive schedule toward Annual Town Meeting. The joint boards are to choose which options to exercise in each step.

### **Step 1: Create a vision and mission statement**

Articulate a positive statement defining the expectations and responsibilities of a consolidated Department of Public Works. The statement may include, but need not be limited to, elements of organization, service level and delivery, efficiency, cost avoidance, community growth and employee development.

Completion Date: 4<sup>th</sup> week of December

Recommendation: Recommend (1) establishing a subcommittee of interested parties and (2) completing Steps 1 & 2 concurrently.

Options

- Expand the Plan subcommittee to include interested parties
- Appoint a subcommittee of affected board, committees and commissions
- Conduct a visioning session open to all residents
- Department heads asked to create vision statement
- Assemble all Town plan vision statements as reference point
- Research market basket towns DPW mission statements
- Other

### **Step 2: Meet with affected boards, committees, commissions and departments**

Mixed feedback has been received on the October 19, 2009 Special Town Meeting DPW consolidation plan. The Board of Selectmen and Town management need to gain a clearer understanding of concerns.

Completion Date: 4<sup>th</sup> week of December

Recommendation: Recommend (1) Selectmen/Finance Committee representatives meet with all board, committees and commissions at their regularly scheduled meetings and Town Manager/Selectmen delegates meet with all departments to hear concerns, and (2) completing Steps 1 & 2 concurrently.

Options

- Selectmen representatives to meet with **all** board, committees and commissions to hear concerns regarding consolidation
- All boards meeting
- Selectmen to attend regularly scheduled board meetings

- Town Manager and/or delegate(s) to meet with **all** departments to hear concerns
- Use Town resources, i.e. website, to solicit resident input
- Other

**Step 3: Document all input**

Assemble all concerns in one written document.

Completion Date: December 31, 2009

Recommendation: Recommend Selectmen draft document.

**Step 4: Develop start-up DPW policies**

The Board of Selectmen to agree to positive, but clear, policies to guide future DPW consolidation efforts, focusing on resolution of real or perceived barriers.

Completion Date: 4<sup>th</sup> week of January

Recommendation: Recommend subcommittee from Step 1 draft policies.

Options

- Subcommittee to draft policy
- Town Management, including Department heads, to draft policy
- Selectmen to draft policy
- Policies to acknowledge concerns
- Policies reviewed/vetted by Department Heads
- Board of Selectmen to review and endorse policies, with recommendation from affected boards, committees, commissions and departments
- Other

**Step 5: Adjust the vision and mission statement, if needed**

This step is to insure that the process is iterative and flexible. Through open dialog, it may be discovered that it is too costly or inefficient to successfully achieve the DPW vision and mission. These statements may need to be amended to accept what can and cannot be accomplished.

Completion Date: 4<sup>th</sup> week of January

Recommendation: Recommend subcommittee from Step 1 amend statements.

Options

- Appoint a core team or individual to amend the vision statement
- Subcommittee to amend the vision statement
- Check for consistency with existing Town plans, i.e., CMP, Water, Open Space, etc.
- Double check consistency with Town Charter and Town Bylaws
- Other

**Step 6: Identify and recommend expected cost savings, cost avoidances and efficiencies**

Further develop and investigate projected cost savings, cost avoidances and efficiencies for each implementation step. Set benchmarks by which to assess savings after implementation or commencement of next step.

Completion Date: Mid February 2010

Recommendation: Recommend the Town Manager appoint a staff liaison to follow through/facilitate data collection and analysis.

**Options**

- List or brainstorm potential cost saving steps and investigate
- List or brainstorm potential cost avoidances at each implementation phase
- List or brainstorm potential efficiency benchmarks to monitor
- List or brainstorm potential cost increases
- Justify increases in the operating budget through expected savings
- Other

**Step 7: Recommend department and/or function integration and timing plan**

Prepare an implementation plan, detailing as many steps as is reasonable, listing efficiencies, costs, cost reductions, cost avoidances and timing.

Completion Date: Late February 2010

Recommendation: Identify best resource to develop implementation plan

**Options**

- Identify best resource to develop an implementation plan
- Go beyond FY11
- Determine best format for an implementation plan
- Recommend adjustments to FY11 operating budget
- Present implementation plan to Joint Boards
- Identify areas for additional study
- Gain buy in/ buy out to plan
- Other

**Step 8: Present plan to all affected boards, committees, commissions and departments**

Share the implementation plan with all affected boards, committees, commissions and departments to gain buy in/ buy out prior to Annual Town Meeting.

Completion Date: Mid March 2010

Recommendation: Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee to complete Step 8.

**Options**

- Ask all affected boards, committees, commissions and departments to hear, review and discuss plan

- Ask all affected boards, committees, commissions and departments to take a position to support or not support the plan before Annual Town Meeting convenes on March 27, 2009
- Make the implementation plan available to residents
- Provide a mechanism for residents to comment or ask questions
- Use Town website/Town Manager's newsletter to publicize progress
- Partner with voter groups, Town committees to hold public forums
- Other

It is anticipated that the plan steps, options and suggestions for other assignments will be discussed at a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee on 12/3/09. The authors desire to have the boards agree to a direction as expeditiously as possible so that work may begin immediately to meet the 2010 Annual Town Meeting timeline. The decisions of the joint boards will be written into a final Plan and shared with the boards and presented to Department Heads at their December 9, 2009 meeting.

November 16, 2009

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*This document also serves as the subcommittee's meeting minutes from  
11/06/09 and 11/20/09 held in the Millennium APR.*